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MECHANICS.

No. I.

WRITING-FRAME FOR THE BLIND.

The SILVER ISIS MEDAL *was presented to Mr.* WILLIAM STIDOLPH, 17 *Lower Belgrave Street, Eaton Square, for his Frame for Guiding the Hand of Blind or Tremulous Writers; a Model of which has been placed in the Society's Repository.*

17 *Lower Belgrave Street, Eaton Square,*
14*th November,* 1839.

SIR,

WISHING to present my Cheiragon, or hand-guide for the blind and tremulous writers, to the Society of Arts, I beg to do so through you. I cannot describe it better than by an extract from my advertisement, " as an instrument by which the ultimatum to the blind, namely, writing straight and equidistant, is completely accomplished without the assistance of any other person, at the same time leaving the hand free from every kind of restraint." I am likewise enabled by its assistance to give lessons in writing to those who are born blind—a desideratûm never before attempted by the profession. It has the strongest recommendations from the Blind Institution, St. George's Fields, the London Society for teaching the Blind to Read (where it is adopted, and I give lessons to the pupils); also by

Mr. Rowe's Academy for the Blind, Brunswick Terrace, Hackney Road, as well as by the leading oculists and medical gentlemen in London. I have letters from each of the three institutions, or rather from their principals, which I can bring with me. It is also recommended for the tremulous, having a rest for the wrist and little finger, which may be still further strengthened by a band being affixed to the wrist collar. I likewise have adopted it for my profession, namely,—to keep the hand in a proper position, for the pen to point to the shoulder, the contrary being a habit of very frequent occurrence among children. It again is used by ladies to cause them to write straight, superseding the use of lines.

I have thus endeavoured to enumerate the qualifications of my invention, at the same time inclose a small draft of it, hoping it will prove satisfactory to the gentlemen forming the Committee.

I am, Sir, &c. &c.
W. STIDOLPH.

A. AIKIN, Esq.
Secretary, &c. &c.

The following letters, signed Charles Rowe, were written in a legible hand :—

School for the Indigent Blind, St. George's Fields,
July 11, 1834.

I HAVE tried several plans for the assistance of persons who are deprived of sight, but have found none to answer so well as the machine invented by Mr. Stidolph, it giving more ease and freedom to the hand of persons so affected, and who, without such machine, would be subject to the necessity of troubling their friends to write for them; with care, a person might write so as to be understood.

CHARLES ROWE.

School for Indigent Blind,
July 11, 1834.

I HEREBY certify that the writing on the other side* was done in my presence by Charles Rowe, a blind pupil in this institution, with Mr. Stidolph's machine.

ROBERT SHARP.
Superintendent.

N.B. I have also to state that this was written without any previous practice, and therefore capable of much improvement.

R. S.

Brunswick Terrace, Hackney Road,
SIR, *July* 11, 1839.

MANY have been the attempts made by ingenious men to enable the blind to write, and though I have tried most of these, yet there is none that has pleased me so much as the one with which I write my present opinion, and of which you are the praise-worthy inventor.

Wishing you every success you deserve,

I am, &c. &c.

To MR. STIDOLPH. C. ROWE.

School for Indigent Blind, St. George's Fields,
DEAR SIR, *September* 23, 1839.

I HAVE laid your machine (for assisting the blind in writing) before the Committee of this Institution, and I have the pleasure to inform you that the gentlemen very much approve of the invention, and consider it will be found useful for the purpose intended; but they cannot introduce it here, as the pupils are received for the purpose of learning some useful trade by which they may procure their livelihood.

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* As written in the letter.

I can, however, safely recommend the machine to any person who may require the guidance or steadying the hand in writing.

I am, Sir, &c. &c.

ROBERT SHARP,
Superintendent.

To Mr. STIDOLPH.

Reference to the Figures.

A frame *a a*, fig. 1, has its inner surface *b* sunk nearly a quarter of an inch and covered with velvet, on which the writing-paper *c c c* is laid, and one edge of it passed under a groove shewn by the dotted line *d d*, the other edge being held down by the rule *e g*, the end *e* fitting a mortice, and *g* dropping into a notch; for holding narrower paper another mortice *h* and notch *k* are provided. In order to determine the distance of the written lines, two racks *l l* are let into the sides of the frame, which cause the hand, when placed as shewn by dotted lines, to move strictly parallel. On the first frame *a a* is laid another frame composed of two bars *m m* and *n n*, the former for supporting the wrist, and the latter being hollowed for the little finger to slide on, united by the wires *o o*. On the bar *m* is made the dove-tailed groove *p p* to receive the wrist-holder *q* which moves quite freely along it, being furnished with two rollers, as shewn in the separate views figs. 2 and 3; the two cheeks *r r* keep the bar *m* in place, whilst the bar *n* drops in between the sides of the frame *a*, and lies on the paper, it being made thinner over the rule *e g;* thus the end shake of the two bars being prevented, the frame *m n o o* cannot tilt, but will keep its parallelism when slidden down the frame *a*.

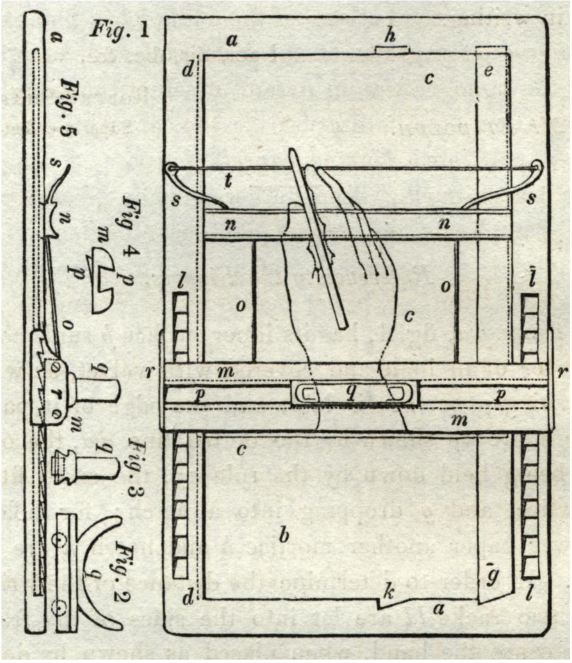

Fig. 4 shews one of the teeth *p* which are fixed under the bar *m* to catch in the racks *l l;* the frame *m n* being moved one tooth lower for each succeeding line. Two wires *s s* fixed in the bar *n* hold an elastic string *t* for the pencil to rest against (which may be used at the option of the writer), the elasticity allowing for the long letters.

Fig. 5 is a side view, and shews the hollow on the bar *n* in which the little finger slides: it is made so smooth that the little finger slides on it as easily as on the paper; and the wrist-holder *q*, covered with velvet above, moves so freely in the groove *p* that the hand does not feel any resistance; this support and the sliding of the little finger ensures straight writing, and equal distances between the lines are obtained by means of the rack.

No. II.

DOUBLE OFFSET PLOTTING SCALE.

The SILVER MEDAL was presented to Mr. JAMES G. AUSTIN, 36 Grafton Street, Gower Street, for his Offset Plotting Scale for the use of Civil Engineers and Surveyors; a Drawing of which has been deposited with the Society.

36 *Grafton Street, Gower Street,*
7th March, 1840.

GENTLEMEN,

ACCOMPANYING I beg leave to bring before your notice my invention of a mathematical instrument (which I have designated as a " Double Offset Plotting Scale"), for the use of civil engineers and land-surveyors, with a view to facilitate the plotting of every kind of survey, and to ensure the greatest possible accuracy; and I am proud to add, that it has met with the unqualified approbation